astral connection

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Connie birthday is almost perfect..except for one thing

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Introduction
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Connie stretched as she walked into her room, ready for bed. Today was an almost perfect birthday. The smile on her face was as glowing as it was when she got to Little Homeworld.

She still remembered seeing Amethyst and Lion appear outside her room, urging her to come with them to Little Homeworld for something big and all hands need to be on deck, Connie was out the house and on lion within a minute; sword strapped, ready to fight.

So imagine her surprise when they slid out of lion's portal Into a party, celebrating her. Hearing both the residents of Beach city and Little Homeworld wish her a happy birthday. Receiving gifts from everyone and getting hugs and praise by the entirety of the crystal gems...Well almost.

Steven wasn't there. Haven't been around for quite awhile now. Ten months since anyone heard from him. No text, voicemail...Nothing.

Her smile fell a bit when she thought of him. Was he well? Was he hurt? Did he find what he was looking for? Did he miss them? Did he miss her? Did he know it was her birthday? Why didn't he take her with him? Were they still Jam Buds?

"Stop Connie. Enough of those thoughts." Connie shook her head as she got ready to sleep, trying to keep her good vibes. With a sigh, she laid in her bed eyes close as she gave a silently prayed for Steven's return as she did every night. It wasn't long til she was fast asleep.

"Connie...Connie.."

Connie groaned as she heard someone calling her name. Feeling someone caressing her cheek with their rugged palm, the touch held a large measure of familiarity, enough to make her snuggle into it.

"Hey..Birthday Berry."

Her eyes opened instantaneously at the name. She looked up to a starlit sky, and a familiar smiling face. She reached up shakingly, touching his slightly whiskered face.

"This..This is a dream right? You're not really with me right now."

"I mean... Astral projection so.."

She could feel her eyes mist up as he chuckled. Sitting up on his lap, she cupped his cheeks taking in his appearance clearly.

His hair was longer than before, in thick curls reaching his mid back. His eyes held a bit of roughness mixed with his natural gentleness in them. He had a couple scars on his cheek and above his left eye. He had a tan, his skin almost the color of beach sand. His face as a whole was more defined, but still retained that Steven-y stature.

"Steven…"

She grasped his red and black star shirt as glaring deeply into his eyes.

"You left without telling anyone, anything.."

"Well, I told dad."

"A week after you left! The only communication ANY of us got!"

"I..I 'm sorry...I had to go…"

"Did you have to leave that? Couldn't you have said goodbye...To me at least?"

"I'm sorry, Connie.. I'm so sorry, but I had to do it."

"You left us..left me..You promise we'll face everything together and you left me again...I would've left with you."

"I know..I considered it...but that would've been selfish of me."

she remained silent for a moment before she broke down, sobbing on his chest. She allowed herself to be held by him as she berated

him for leaving without so much as a word, for hurting everyone when he did. Steven took it all as he rubbed her back and kissed her crown, whispering apologies.

It would be a few minutes before she settled down into his hold allowing herself to bask in the warmth of her best friend, holding him closer afraid he'll disappear again.

"I miss you so much, Biscuit."

Steven deepened his hold around her. "I miss you too, Berry. Think about you and everyone, everyday."

"Where are you now? Close by?"

Steven sighed sadly at the hope in her voice

"Sorry, but no. Still far away. Some small inn in South America, I think . "

"Explains the tan…" She looked up at him with shy puffy eyes. "It looks good on you."

"That seems to be the consensus around here as well."

Connie arched an eyebrow as she sat up out of his hug. Her arms folded across her middle. "Oh, really? You've gotten popular with girls now?"

Steven rubbed his head sheepishly. "I mean, not really popular..Just had some girls stare at me and approached me ever so often."

"Uh-huh. " Connie sighed as she looked him up and down. He was still a big guy, but he had put on some muscle. She found her cheeks burning a bit when she drank in his appearance as a whole.

" I guess I can understand where they're coming from."

Steven her a teasing chuckle. "You're not jealous now, are you?"

Connie looked away with a side pout. "Oh be quiet…"

"You've gotten prettier, since last time I saw you."

Connie tried to hold her anger, but broke at one glance of his boyish smile. She found it hard to look at him so she kept her face turned, but looked through the corner of her eye.

"You think so?

Steven nodded feeling a small heat come to his own face. He took in her nape length side bang hair. Her bright black eyes, her full lips, her pointed nose, and deep glossy brown skin.

His blush intensified when he realized she was in her sleepwear which consisted of one of his old blue and yellow shirts, and thigh length sweatpants. Both which hugged her frame gently, but still gave him an idea about how much she grew in his absence.

"Steven. ..You're staring."

Steven faked a cough before turning away from Connie,who giggled.

"Sorry.. Just..Appreciating how much you have grown."

"Oh, and exactly what are you 'appreciating', you vagabond." Connie smirked as she leaned forward with an impishly seductive glint in her eyes.

"Connie.."

"Well…"

"You're serious "

"I wanna know."

Steven didn't say anything before pulling her in close and resting his head right her breast, his arms wrapped around her waist.

"Everything…"

"You don't play fair, Steven." Connie held him close, her left arm around his shoulders, her right hand holding the back of his head as

she kissed his very tip top." I should be hitting you, kicking your butt all across the astral plane."

Her grip tightened as she continued. " But All I want for you is to come home..come back to us..to me.."

"Nini-"

Connie shook her head. "I won't ask you to though..No matter how much I want to. Don't think it'll do any good."

"If you asked, with the way you're hugging me right now, there's a high chance I would return quickly."

She giggled as she began to stroke his head. "I won't. Seems like this journey of yours, is doing you good...Just try to keep me updated for now on..I worry about you."

He looked up at her a somewhat pleased look in his eye. "I can do that."

"Thank you, Biscuit."

Connie very reluctantly removed herself from Steven hold, but still held on to his hands.

"Truly, thank you, for visiting tonight. Seeing that you're doing well..That you're safe...How handsome you've become. I couldn't ask for anything more..It's the best gift I could have received. You officially made this my best birthday."

Steven blushed a bit teary eyed." Aw, shucks Ni'...That's sweet of you, but I didn't just come visit you empty handed...You don't have to get up early right?"

"Nooo. Why?"

Steven smirked as he pointed to the west. Connie looked towards where he was pointing and realized a few things.

One, they were on a hill.

Two, there was an outdoor stage below them.

Three, There was one seat, a throne actually, facing the stage...that had her name on it.

Connie arched an eyebrow as she turned towards her Biscuit.

"You throwing me a concert?"

Steven lifted her up in a cradle, catching her pleasantly of guard.

"I'm throwing you a concert."

Connie yelped and laughed as Steven leaped from their hill and glided down towards the concert area. He landed gently and placed her on her feet, when they realized, he was taller than ker by a quarter head. Dual flame cheeks appeared in their faces.

"Oh, wow..Gotta tilt up a bit to meet your eyes."

"Yeah..You do.."

The two stared for a moment before chuckling. He guided her into her seat giving her hand a small kiss before jumping onto the stage himself. With a snap of his fingers duplicates of him appeared each with a different instrument; A bass, a guitar, a drum set and a keyboard. With a flick of the wrist, a mic appeared in his hand. He gave his band a nod before they started playing an upbeat, high energy tune.

Steven took a deep breath before he let use a husky deeper crisper voice than she ever heard as he sang a rendition of 'Gold'.

Dream of anything;

I'll make it all come true

Everything you need

Is all I'll have for you

I'm forever

Always by your side

Whenever you need a friend

I'm never far behind

Connie couldn't help the excitement running through her spine,or the swelling of her heart as he performed. It had been too long since she saw her Steven, this energetic, this happy and free. Not to mention his voice now shook her in all the right ways. She always thought his singing voice was sweet to listen to and was one of the things she always found attractive..but now she found herself parched from listening.

Steven put on a show indeed. From upbeat songs like 'Gold' To slower ones like 'Fly me to the moon' he made sure that she never left his sight more than needed. Every verse, chorus, melody and bridge was dedicated to her alone, and he wanted to convey that. He wanted her to realize that she was still in his heart. All in all the concert was a hit.

It was after two hours on stage that Steven stepped off the stage mic abandoned. A bit sweaty, a bit haggard, but accomplished. Connie shivered at his appearance, a very good one.

The band started to play a memorable tune, one that made Connie teared up, smiling as she did.

"Steven, really."

Steven nodded, giving her a smile. Holding his hand out to her, which she gladly took. The two began swaying gently to the beat as Steven began to sing

"The stars are out,

the band's on the scene

I'm here with my sweet Connie

Come on and share this dream with me"

Connie didn't miss a beat as she began to sing her head meeting Stevens chest, as she interlock her hand with Steven's.

"in space, on land or the deep sea,

anyway place is fine, if it's you and me

Come on and share this dream with me."

Steven cheeks were turned pink at the silky soft tone coming from his Berry as she continued to sing.

"I won't stop till it's done, a dream crafted with all the joy, we can think ooo~oof."

Steven gave her a cheeky grin before twirling her away a bit, still holding on to her hand.

"I'll keep it fun, fueling this dream with our love!"

He twirled her back to him, she laughed throughout the whole thing, as she found herself caught in a hug. She eagerly returned it as their voices harmonized.

"Our hearts and minds, in harmonious unity

don't matter the scene, as long as you're with me

Now and forever, share this dream with me."

The two reunited jam buds gazed at each other, matching smiles on their faces. The band was gone, this was the last song. Steven stroked her hair as she snuggled deeper into him, gripping his back.

"Need to get back to my head"

"I know. I won't stop you, but can I ask for one thing."

Steven looked down and nodded "Whatever you need Birthday Berry."

"Dip down"

Steven did as she requested and was surprised when she covered his eyes and felt her kiss his lips. Not so much that he didn't kiss her back. Connie's hand went from his eyes to his cheek as the kiss deepened and tears fell from both of them. They broke the kiss chuckling as they stroked each other's tears away.

"I don't want to leave you again."

"I know, I know..but I'll keep you updated.. when I can. We'll do this again. I promise. "

"I'm gonna hold you to that.You promise to keep me updated..so please text me or something when you get the chance."

Steven nodded as he gave one more chaste kiss. It was the last thing she felt before she woke up.